NSCI 320/520
Public Science Communication Seminar

Co-Instructors:

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Course Website: https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/11981

Overview
Scientists are increasingly expected to communicate with the public. In this course, students hear from people who regularly communicate about science with general audiences in order to gain an appreciation for the various types of public science communication, its importance to society, and techniques used in effective public science communication.

Student Learning Objectives
By the end of this course, students will be expected to:

1) be familiar with the various formats in which science is communicated to the public, including through online and print news, magazines, books, blogs, press releases, video, radio, museum exhibits, interviews, lectures, and informal presentations;

2) appreciate the importance to society of communicating science to the public;

3) understand the challenges associated with public science communication; and

4) be familiar with techniques that lead to best results when communicating science to the public.

Class Meetings (Mondays 4 – 4:50 pm in KWG 100)
Class meetings will alternate between presentations by guest speakers who regularly communicate science to public audiences, and discussions in which class participants and instructors will reflect on previous presentations and consider other examples of effective (and ineffective) public science communication. To prepare for visits by guest speakers, participants will be asked to review an example of the guests work. Active participation in all class meetings is expected and counts towards the final course grade.

Disabilities
If you have a disability that will impact your coursework, please contact one of the co-instructors during the first two weeks of class. All discussions remain confidential. Additionally, you must contact Disability Support Services (http://dss.rice.edu/) located in the Allen Center, Room 111.

Assignments

1. Journals – Students will keep a journal in which they will reflect on presentations by guest speakers. Journals will be graded at the end of the semester based on the extent to which they accurately reflect each presentation and the extent to which they demonstrate thoughtful reflection by the participant.
2. Critical evaluation – Students will locate and critically evaluate an example of effective and of ineffective popular science communication. Students enrolled in NSCI 520 will evaluate examples of science communication in multiple formats.

Grading

Journals:	60 points
Critical Evaluation:	20 points
Participation:	20 points
Total points:	100 points

Honor Code

Journals should reflect the personal observations and thoughts of each participant. Although discussion with classmates and others in encouraged, anything written in a participant's journal is assumed to be their own, original work unless otherwise indicated. Any indication of a violation of this policy will result in an Honor Council investigation.

Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change)

Date	**Topic**	**Presenter(s)/Affiliation**
Jan 8	Introduction and course overview	Solomon & Kapcha
Jan 15	*No class (MLK Day)*	
Jan 22	Science and the media	**Jade Boyd**/Rice Public Affairs
Jan 29	Wildlife conservation	**Jaime González**/Katy Prairie Conservancy
Feb 5	Discussion	Solomon & Kapcha
Feb 12	Meteorology & space science	**Eric Berger**/Ars Technica & SpaceCityWeather
Feb 19	Communicating science with humor	**Kelly & Zach Weinersmith**/Authors of *Soonish*
Feb 26	Public health communication	**Peter Hotez**/Baylor College of Medicine
Mar 5	Discussion	Solomon & Kapcha
Mar 12	*No class (Spring Break)*	
Mar 19	Communicating science through photography	**Mark Moffett**/Smithsonian Institution
Mar 26	Science and public policy	**Neal Lane**/Baker Institute
Apr 2	TBA	TBA
Apr 9	Discussion	Solomon & Kapcha
Apr 16	Final wrap up and reflections	Solomon & Kapcha